



## **JOINT STATEMENT**

### **SEDM MINISTERS OF DEFENCE MEETING**

**Batumi, 11<sup>th</sup> October 2017**

We the Defence Ministers of the Southeastern Europe Defence Ministerial (SEDM)

Process:

Her Excellency, Olta Xhaçka, represented by Mr. Petro KOÇI, Deputy Minister of Defence

Her Excellency, Marina PENDES, represented by Mr. Sead JUSIĆ, Deputy Minister of Defence

His Excellency, Krasimir KARAKACHANOV, represented by Colonel Vencislav VASSILEV, Deputy Director of the Defence Policy Directorate

His Excellency, Damir KRSTICEVIC, represented by Mr. Petar MIHATOV, Defence Policy Director and Assistant Minister of Defence

Her Excellency, Radmila SHEKERINSKA JANKOVSKA, represented by Mr. Dragan NIKOLIKJ, State Secretary

His Excellency, Levan IZORIA

His Excellency, Panos KAMMENOS, represented by Ambassador Tryphon PARASKEVOPOULOS, Director General for Defence Policy

Her Excellency, Roberta PINOTTI, represented by Carlo MASSAGLI, Vice Admiral of Defence General Staff and Special Advisor of the Ministry of Defence

His Excellency, Predrag BOSKOVIC, represented by Mr. Ivica IVANOVIC, Director of Defence Policy and Assistant of the Minister of Defence

His Excellency, Mihai Viorel FIFOR, represented by Mr. Mircea DUŞA, State Secretary and Chief of the Department for Defence Policy and Planning

His Excellency, Aleksandar VULIN represented by Mr. Milan MOJSILOVIĆ, Assistant of the Minister of Defence

Her Excellency, Andreja KATIC, represented by Mr. Miloš BIZJAK, State Secretary of the Ministry of Defence

His Excellency, Nurettin CANIKLI

His Excellency, Stepan POLTORAK, represented by Ihor DOLHOV, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary in Tbilisi

met in Batumi on 11th October 2017, strongly determined to promote enduring-peace, stability and security in the region of South-Eastern Europe (SEE) through the SEDM process.

We highly appreciated the inspiring key note speech given by the Minister Mr. Levan IZORIA and the opening remarks given by the Chairman of SEDM-CC/PMSC Ambassador Eleftherios ANGHELOPOULOS.

We welcomed and expressed our good wishes to Athens Chairmanship, and the new Chairman of SEDM-CC/PMSC. We also welcomed the new Commander of SEEBRIG, Brigadier General Tudorica PETRACHE wishing every success in his tour of duty. We also expressed deepest appreciation to Ambassador Levent BILGEN and Ambassador Hüseyin MÜFTÜOĞLU, the former Chairmen of the SEDM-CC/PMSC and thanked Brigadier General Faruk METİN, former

Commander of SEEBRIG, for their valuable contributions in promoting the goals of SEDM process.

We welcomed the presence of the representatives from the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC), RACVIAC- Centre for Security Cooperation and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)/South Eastern and Eastern Europe Clearinghouse for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SEESAC).

We appreciate the efforts of RACVIAC – Center for Security Cooperation as an important international organization in the SEE dealing with security issues, playing a leading role in the areas of confidence and security building measures, security cooperation, C-WMD, Counter – Terrorism including Foreign Terrorist Fighters and, contributing to the Euro-Atlantic integration processes. We will further promote and support the activities organized by RACVIAC with the aim to enhance the security dialogue and cooperation in the SEE.

We noted with satisfaction the achievements obtained within the process as presented by the Chairman of the SEDM-CC/PMSC in his update on the SEDM projects and the way ahead. We also welcomed the progress accomplished in all current projects and in the MPFSEE Nations efforts to revise the MPFSEE Agreement. We instructed the Secretariat to continue working on the completion of the 6<sup>th</sup> Additional Protocol in cooperation with the MPFSEE Nations, with the intention of signing the above mentioned document by the MPFSEE Ministers at the Ministerial meeting in 2018, on the occasion of the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the signing of MPFSEE Agreement.

We welcomed the Chairman's report which provided a summary of the activities of the Chairmanship on priority issues since the last SEDM Ministerial meeting in 2016.

The Chairman also provided an update on the status of the following SEDM projects:

- Southeastern Europe Simulation Network Exercise (SEESIM -18),
- Interconnection of Military Hospitals (IMIHO),
- SEDM Permanent Portal,
- Building Integrity (BI) Project,
- Female Leaders in Security and Defence (FLSD) Project

We noted with appreciation the progress achieved in all current projects since the last Ministerial meeting in Rome.

We further welcomed the establishment of SEDM Information and Communication Systems and Social Media Policy aimed at increasing visibility and public awareness of our initiative as well as the IMIHO Guidance and Framework which will foster cooperation among military hospitals.

We encouraged all nations to support and participate in the SEESIM-18 Exercise, to be held in İstanbul, which will be a valuable tool for promoting the visibility of SEDM process and achieving interoperability among members.

We, through the presentations of our national views on the way ahead, reaffirmed our commitment to strengthening political and military cooperation in SEE to support and enhance regional security, stability, good neighborly relations

and contribute in preventing deterioration of security and strengthen the defence architecture.

We welcomed the strengthening and enlargement of European and Euro-Atlantic multilateral cooperation focused in enhancing security and stability in South-Eastern Europe and the Black Sea region.

We reiterated our unwavering commitment to the international law, the purposes and principles of the UN Charter and the Helsinki Final Act, including full respect of sovereignty and territorial integrity of all states, peaceful settlement of disputes, good neighborly relations and refraining from the threat or use of force.

We expressed our strong belief that we, the Ministers of Defence of the South-Eastern Europe, should come together, to further enhance regional dialogue and cooperation and solve, in full respect of international law, any persisting problems, in order for our region to genuinely advance the goals of wider international community in promoting peace, security and stability in our wider neighbourhood, as credible and strategic partners.

We noted with serious concern the common challenges that the ongoing migration and refugee flows pose to our region and we reiterated our commitment to support and complement the efforts of the international community, within the UN legal framework, to cut the lines of smuggling and human trafficking. We reiterated our resolve to maintain and strengthen our own regional coordination and cooperation on this issue. As in Rome, we reiterated that bringing peace and stability, providing a sustainable economic growth and thus creating conditions for human and social development in the countries of origin will encourage their people to seek their future in their homelands rather than in other countries, as in

Europe. We express our concern over grave security and human right situation in conflict-affected areas and stress the necessity for peaceful settlement of ongoing and protracted conflicts, and respect of fundamental rights of IDPs and refugees to safe and dignified return to their homes.

We reaffirmed our strongest condemnation of all terrorist attacks in different parts of the world, noting that terrorism constitutes one of the most serious threats to international peace and security. We reiterated our support and commitment to the efforts of the international community to fight terrorism, including through concerted regional cooperation. We underlined the need to efficiently address the root causes of this scourge and tackle the spread of radicalization and extremism in our own region.

We noted with deep concern the serious risks posed by cyber and hybrid threats, smuggling of arms, drugs, as well as organized crime, to the security and stability of the region, including through financing terrorism.

We expressed our gravest concern about the proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD), in particular the recent nuclear and ballistic missile tests, as well as all other provocative activities in the Korean peninsula, posing a clear threat to international peace and security. We reiterated our strong belief that international obligations should be fully met and all relevant UN Security Council Resolutions should be implemented and constructive dialogue should prevail. We also noted with concern the risk of proliferation of WMD to non-state actors.

We reaffirmed our dedication to the ‘open door policy’ for the aspirant states which want to be part of the SEDM initiative and whose participation could help mitigate the SEEBRIG’s recognized shortfalls and capability gap.

The MPFSEE Ministers strongly encouraged Sarajevo to finalize their national procedure for the ratification of MPFSEE Agreement, in order to greet Sarajevo as a new member.

The MPFSEE Ministers welcomed the report presented by COMSEEBRIG on SEEBRIG activities and achievements since the last SEDM Meeting.

We welcomed COMSEEBRIG's intention to further enhance cooperation for training activities with the affiliated units and conduct annual meetings with their Commanders.

We, the MPFSEE Ministers noted with satisfaction the member nations' and SEEBRIG HQ's willingness to work together on developing options to streamline exercise policy for SEEBRIG and practical solutions for cooperation between SEEBRIG HQ and relevant NATO HQ's of our region in order to allow a coordinated long-term approach to SEEBRIG exercise programme and better access of SEEBRIG to opportunities for training at NATO standards. A progress report is expected to the next ministerial meeting.

We, the MPFSEE Ministers approved the SEEBRIG HQ Budget for 2018, the Action Plan regarding Auditors Observations and the Annual Plan for Activities (Coordination, Training and Evaluation) for 2018, as well as COMSEEBRIG's authorization to re-allocate up to 20% among chapters of the approved 2018 Budget, as agreed during 38<sup>th</sup> PMSC Meeting.

We approved the Standing Operating Procedures (SOP) regarding "SEDM Guidelines for Meetings and Activities".

Under the item IMIHO project we approved the Standing Operating Procedures (SOP) regarding the "IMIHO Guidance and Framework" and under the item SEDM Permanent Portal project the White Papers regarding the "SEDM

Information and Communication Services” and the “Content and Social Media Strategy”.

We, the MPFSEE Ministers of Defence signed the “HQ SEEBRIG Location and Critical Slots Table after the Year 2015” document, as it was agreed at the 38<sup>th</sup> PMSC Meeting. This Agreement establishes the basis for implementing the rotation of the SEEBRIG HQ, Chairmanship and Critical Slots until the year 2038.

We conveyed our gratitude to Tbilisi for the excellent hospitality extended to all delegations during the Ministerial Meeting. We also expressed our sincere appreciation for Tbilisi’s commitment to international and Euro-Atlantic stability, demonstrated through its significant contributions to security and peacekeeping operations around the world, and note its continual progress towards strengthening its democracy.

We are confident that Tbilisi’s path will continue promoting stability and democratic values throughout the region.

We confirmed that the next Ministerial Meeting will be hosted by Belgrade in October 2018, according to the meeting calendar.

We expressed our appreciation to Tbilisi and particularly H.E. Mr. Levan IZORIA and to all officials both from Tbilisi and SEDM-CC/PMSC Athens Chairmanship for their tireless efforts in successfully preparing and conducting the annual SEDM Ministerial Meeting.

BG Achillefs TAOUXIS  
Head of SEDM-CC/PMSC Secretariat

H.E. Amb. ah Eleftherios ANGHELOPOULOS  
SEDM-CC/PMSC Chairman